

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7600

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 3811

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK

SUBJECT: INDO-PAK RELATIONS

REF: A. STATE 058326; AND B. STATE 058327

BEGIN SUMMARY. POL COUNSELOR REVIEWED US UNDERSTANDING OF PAKISTANI VIEWS ON INDO-PAK RELATIONS AND ARMS PURCHASES ALONG LINES SUGGESTED REF A WITH INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY JOINT SECRETARY (PAKISTAN) CHIB MARCH 18. CHIB ASKED HOW PAK PROTESTATIONS OF INTEREST IN CONTINUING NORMALIZATION CAN BE RECONCILED WITH WHAT INDIA CONSIDERS UPSURGE OF PAKISTANI PROPAGANDA AGAINST INDIA. WHILE HE BELIEVED INDIA AND PAKISTAN MIGHT AGREE TO MEET IN APRIL TO TALK ABOUT CIVIL WUIATION AND OTHER MATTERS, HE WAS LESS SANGUINE ABOUT CHANCES FOR PROGRESS GIVEN THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY PAKISTANI PROPAGANDA. END SUMMARY.

1. CHIB EXPLAINED THAT GOI (FONSEC KEWAL SINGH) AND GOP (FONSEC AGA SHAHI) HAD BEEN EXCHANGING LETTERS SINCE FEBRUARY 25, PRIMARILY ON THE SUBJECT OF UPSURGE IN PAK RADIO PROPAGANDA AIMED AT INDIA. INDIAN LETTERS OF FEBRUARY 25, MARCH 1, AND MARCH 10 WERE BALANCED BY PAK REPLIES FEBRUARY 27, MARCH 4, AND ABOUT MARCH 16. INDIANS HAVE SENT GOP TWO COLLECTIONS OF EXAMPLES OF PAKISTANI "OFFENSIVE" BROADCAST STATEMENTS

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TO ISLAMABAD. THE PAKISTANIS HAVE RESPONDED WITH

SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF INDIAN "VIOLATIONS" OF THE MUTUAT AGREEMENT REACHED AT THE END OF 1974 ON CESSATION OF PROPAGANDA ATTACKS, BOTH SIDES HAVE EMPHASIZED THEY EACH CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO THE "NO PROPAGANDA" AGREEMENT, BUT EACH IS ACCUSING THE OTHER OF VIOLATING THE SPIRIT OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

2. CHIB NOTED BHUTTO'S LETTER TO MRS. GANDHI HAD INDEED CALLED FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE INDO-PAK NORMALIZATION PROCESS. BUT HOW, HE ASKED, COULD THIS PRIVATE ASSURANCE, AND THE SIMILAR ONES HE HAS CONVEYED TO THE US, BE RECONCILED WITH THE ONGOING PROPAGANDA WAR? GRANTED, HE SAID, THERE HAD BEEN SOME DIMINUTION IN THE LAST WEEK OF PAKISTANI PROPAGANDA, BUT IT WAS STILL HIGH AND UNLESS IT WAS "COOLED", COULD ONE REALLY TALK ABOUT MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION? CHIB SAID HE THOUGHT BHUTTO WAS STILL USING INDO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS, AND KASHMIR IN PARTICULAR, THE CONSOLIDATE HIS POLITICAL POSITION INSIDE PAKISTAN AND SAID THIS COULD ONLY AROUSE CONTINUING INDIAN CONCERN OVER WHAT BHUTTO'S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS REALLY WERE ABOUT INDO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS. IT MUST CERTAINLY BE CLEAR TO BHUTTO, HE SAID, THAT THE ACCESSION OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH AS CHIEF MINISTER OF KASHMIR IN NO WAY VIOLATED THE SPIRIT OR LETTER OF THE SIMLA AGREEMENT, AND CONTINUING PAKISTANI ATTACKS ON THE SHEIKH COULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING.

3. IN THE MEANTIME, CHIB SAID, BOTH SIDES HAVE ALSO BEEN DICKERING OVER WHEN THE TALKS ON CIVIL AVIATION AND THE SALAL DAM (ON THE CHENAB IN JAMMU) WILL TAKE PLACE. CHIB COMMENTED THAT THE PAKISTANIS HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FEBRUARY 20 DATE AND HAD SUBSEQUENTLY PROPOSED MARCH 28. THIS WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO INDIA SINCE IT WAS ONLY A DAY AFTER FONSEC KEWAL SINGH RETURNED FROM HAVANA TO NEW DELHI AND IN ANY EVENT CONFLICTED WITH THE NEXT ROUND OF INDO-BANGLADESH TALKS ON THEIR MARITIME BOUNDARY. CHIB THOUGHT SOME DATE IN APRIL WOULD BE FINALLY AGREED ON. THE PAKISTANI TRADE MISSION WOULD ALSO

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PROBABLY STILL COME EARLY IN APRIL.

4. CHIB OBSERVED THAT A LETTER REPLYING TO BHUTTO'S FEBRUARY 25 LETTER TO MRS. GANDHI HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR THE PM AND WOULD PROBABLY BE SENT NEXT WEEK. IT WOULD MAKE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME POINTS CHIB SAID HE HAD BEEN REVIEWING WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR: IN ESSENCE, WE ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE OUR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS BUT HOW

FAR CAN THESE GO WHILE PROPAGANDA ATTACKS REMAIN
UNABATED?

5. CHIB EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE THAT TIKKA KHAN WOULD
TAKE A DIFFERENT TACK PUBLICLY THAN BHUTTO AND
OBSERVED THIS WOULD CERTAINLY NOT HAPPEN IN INDIA. HE
WONDERED ALOUD WHETHER THIS DID NOT CONTINUE TO
SUGGEST THE DIFFERENT DEGREE OF CIVIL CONTROL OVER
THE MILITARY IN PAKISTAN THAN IN INDIA, AND APPEARED
MORE STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT TIKKA KHAN AS A
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MILITARY, AND BHUTTO APPEARED TO
DIFFER ON ARMS PURCHASES THAN BY THE INDICATION THAT
BHUTTO WAS CONCERNED THAT TIKKA KHAN'S COMMENTS NOT BE
TAKEN BY THE US (AND INDIA) AS REFLECTING GOP POLICY.

6. COMMENT: ALL IN ALL, RATHER A LOW-KEY PRESENTATION
BY CHIB, MARKED BY NOT A SINGLE SPECIFIC ADVERSE
COMMENT ABOUT US ARMS POLICY PER SE, AN INDICATION THE
INDIANS ARE ENVISAGING A RENEWAL ON INDOA-PAKISTAN BILATERAL
TALKS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, BUT AN INDICATION THAT THE ATMOSPHERE
MAY NOT IN FACT BE PROPITIOUS FOR SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS
ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. END COMMENT.
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